
Manner: UNDETERMINED

The King County Medical Examiner's Office certifies a manner of death as Undetermined when available information regarding the circumstances of death is insufficient to classify the death into one of the specific manners of natural or unnatural death (Accident, Homicide, or Suicide). In some cases, serious doubt existed as to whether an injury occurred with intent or as a result of an accident. Information concerning the circumstances may be lacking due to the absence of background information or witnesses, or because of a lengthy delay between death and discovery of the body. Moreover, it may be difficult to assess street drug or medication overdose deaths as showing enough features to reasonably determine the manner of death. If an extensive investigation and autopsy cannot clarify the circumstances, the death is classified Undetermined.

The King County Medical Examiner's Office certified 53 deaths with manner undetermined, accounting for three percent (53/2,055) of the deaths investigated for the calendar year 2006. Drugs and poisons caused 13 or 25%, of these 53 deaths of undetermined manner. For a more detailed review of drug-caused deaths in 2006, see the discussion in the section on Drugs and Poisons on pages 83 and 84.

The 53 deaths that were classified as Undetermined for 2006 include nine fetal deaths, which, in accordance with the Washington State Department of Health - Center for Health Statistics Fetal Death Certification Guidelines, are not assigned a manner of death. Fetal death certificates must be issued for every fetus of 20 weeks or more gestation. The Medical Examiner assumed jurisdiction over nine fetal deaths in 2006, including one that was related to maternal drug use.

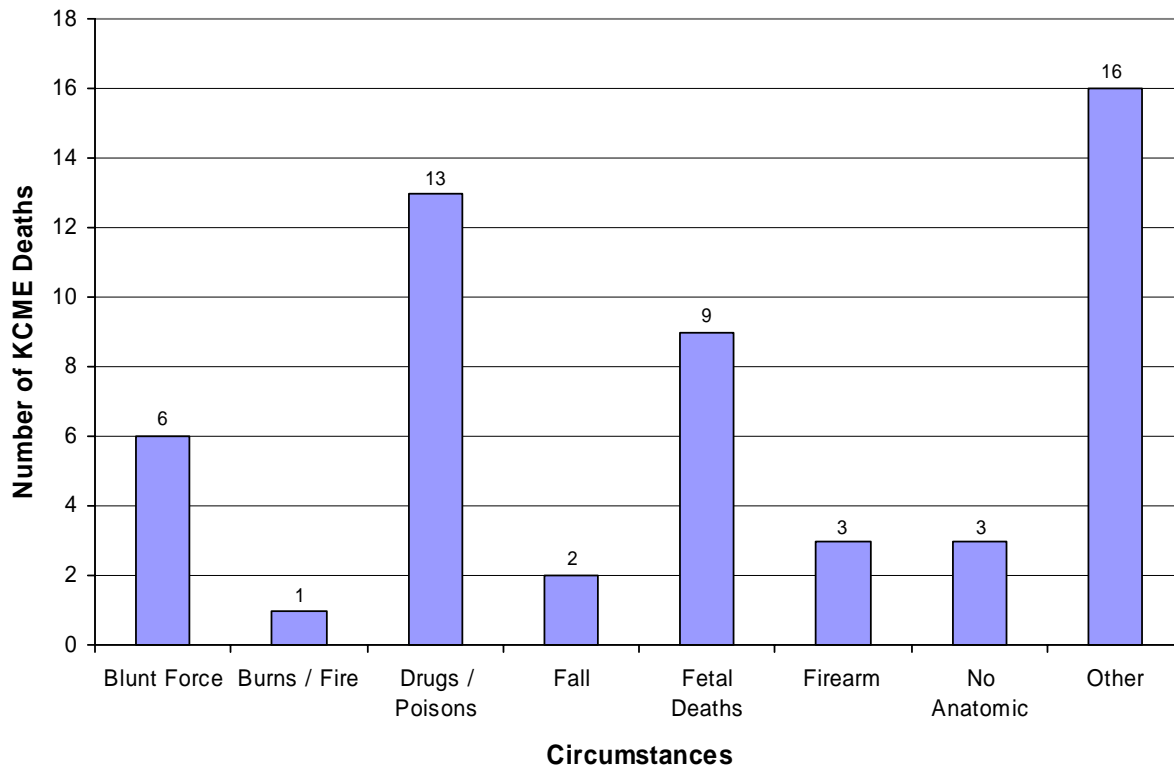
Graph 8-1 Undetermined Manner of Death / King County Medical Examiner / 2006

Table 8-1 Undetermined Manner of Death / Race / Sex / KCME / 2006

CIRCUMSTANCES / SEX	RACE					SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	OTHER / UNK		
Blunt Force	3	2	0	1	0		6
<i>Male</i>	2	1	0	1	0	4	
<i>Female</i>	1	1	0	0	0	2	
Burns / Fire	1	0	0	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Drugs / Poisons	11	0	1	1	0		13
<i>Male</i>	5	0	1	0	0	6	
<i>Female</i>	6	0	0	1	0	7	
Fall	2	0	0	0	0		2
<i>Male</i>	2	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fetal Deaths ¹	5	2	0	0	2		9
<i>Male</i>	3	2	0	0	0	5	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	1	2	
<i>Unknown</i>	1	0	0	0	1	2	
Firearms	3	0	0	0	0		3
<i>Male</i>	2	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
No Anatomic or Toxicologic Cause of Death	3	0	0	0	0		3
<i>Male</i>	2	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Other	13	2	0	0	1		16
<i>Male</i>	11	2	0	0	0	13	
<i>Female</i>	2	0	0	0	1	3	
Totals	41	6	1	2	3		53
Percent	77%	11%	2%	4%	6%		100%

¹Includes one fetal death related to maternal methamphetamine use. This death is included in the Drugs & Poisons chapter.

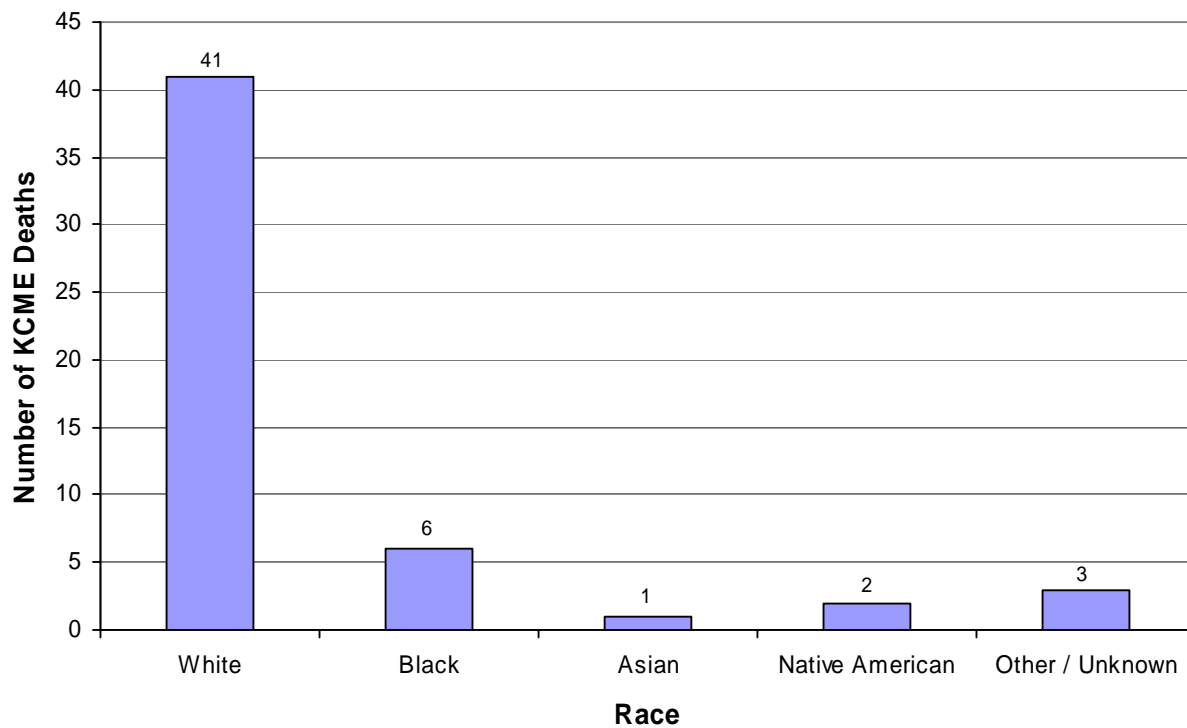
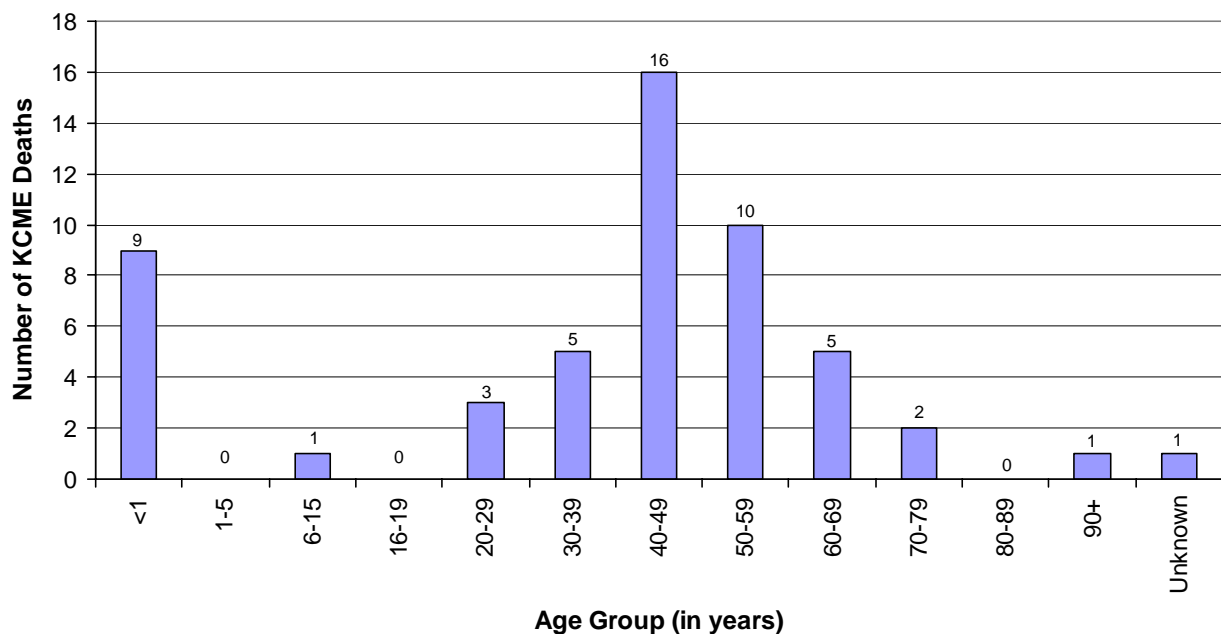
Graph 8-2 Undetermined Manner / Race / King County Medical Examiner / 2006**Graph 8-3 Undetermined Manner / Age Group / King County Medical Examiner / 2006**

Table 8-2 Undetermined Circumstances / Age / Sex / KCME / 2006

INJURY METHOD / SEX	AGE GROUP (YEARS)												SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	<1	1 to 5	6 to 15	16 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 to 89	90 +		
Blunt Force	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	1	0	0	0		6
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	4	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	
Burns / Fire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Drugs / Poisons	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	5	1	1	0	0		13
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	6	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	0	0	0	7	
Fall	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0		2
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fetal Deaths	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		9
<i>Male</i>	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	
<i>Female</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Unknown</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Firearms	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0		3
<i>Male</i>	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
No anatomic or toxicological cause of death	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0		3
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Other ²	0	0	0	0	1	3	5	2	2	1	0	1		16
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	1	2	5	2	1	1	0	1	13	
<i>Female</i> ³	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	
Totals⁴	9	0	1	0	3	5	16	10	5	2	0	1		53
Percent	17.3	0	1.9	0	5.8	9.6	30.8	19.2	9.6	3.9	0	1.9		100%

²Includes one female of undetermined age.³Includes one female of undetermined age.⁴Includes one female of undetermined age.

Table 8-3 Undetermined Manner / Sex / King County Medical Examiner / 2006

INJURY METHOD	SEX		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	
Blunt Force	4	2	6
Burns / Fire	1	0	1
Drugs / Poisons	6	7	13
Fall	2	0	2
Fetal Deaths ⁵	5	2	7
Firearms	2	1	3
No Anatomic or Toxicologic Cause of Death	2	1	3
Other	13	3	16
Totals⁶	35	16	51
Percent	69%	31%	100%

Table 8-4 Undetermined Manner / Blood Alcohol / King County Medical Examiner / 2006

METHOD	TESTED		NOT	TOTAL
	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	TESTED	
Blunt Force	4	1	1	6
Burns / Fire	0	1	0	1
Drugs / Poisons	3	7	3	13
Fall	1	0	1	2
Fetal Deaths	0	3	6	9
Firearms	0	3	0	3
No Anatomic or Toxicologic Cause of Death	2	1	0	3
Other	7	3	6	16
Totals	17	19	17	53
Percent	32%	36%	32%	100%

⁵Does not include two fetal deaths of undetermined sex.⁶Does not include two fetal deaths of undetermined sex.